

VZCZCXRO5824
PP RUEHDT
DE RUEHDT #0027/01 0350638
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P R 040638Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4693
INFO RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 4261

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 DILI 000027

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EIND](#) [ETRD](#) [KTIP](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [TT](#)

SUBJECT: TIMOR-LESTE: INFORMATION ON CHILD LABOR AND FORCED LABOR

REF: A. A) STATE 131995

[1](#)B. B) 08 DILI 41

[1](#)1. Summary: Child labor in Timor-Leste remains pervasive and difficult to quantify (see ref B for further background). Children work in agriculture, as street and market vendors, and as domestic laborers. Although there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that underage girls have been forced into prostitution, this and other severe forms of child labor are not believed to be chronic or widespread. The successful maintenance of peace and stability over the last two years has given the GOTL an opportunity to strengthen its legislation and enforcement mechanisms in an effort to tackle the problem of child labor. These efforts are still in the initial stages and remain incomplete. End Summary.

[1](#)2. With regard to the questions posed in ref A in relation to Tasking 1/Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2005 (TVPRA), post was unable to collect specific information or data to indicate that forced labor or exploitative child labor was used in the production of goods in Timor-Leste. Interviews with the ILO and local NGOs suggest that child labor in the agricultural sector (including the production of coffee, Timor-Leste's primary non-energy export) was widespread, but no data or observations were offered suggesting that such labor was forced or exploitative.

[1](#)3. With regard to the questions posed in ref A in relation to Tasking 2/Trade and Development Act of 2000 (TDA), the following answers are provided to the questions posed in para 21:

2A) Children in Timor-Leste are believed to be involved in domestic service, street vending, and, occasionally, in child prostitution. The GOTL did not collect or publish data on exploitative child labor during this period.

2B) The GOTL adopted ILO Convention 182 (Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor) in April 2009. Timor-Leste has yet to ratify ILO Convention 138 (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment), however, probably due to concerns that the current mandatory education requirements would set the minimum employment age too high. The adoption of Convention 182, however, has yet to lead to meaningful improvements in the legal and regulatory framework which remains inadequate for addressing exploitative child labor. Specifically, for example, labor inspectors in Timor-Leste currently lack the authority to enforce labor laws. A new Labor Code that is expected to be approved this year may address this problem.

2C) Sections I & II: Hazardous Child Labor & Forced Child Labor:

¶1. The Secretary of State for Vocational Training and Employment, the National Police of Timor-Leste, and the Ministry for Social Solidarity are the agencies responsible for enforcement of laws relating to child labor.

¶2. Mechanisms for exchanging information exist, but are not perfect.

¶3. There was no separate mechanism for making complaints about hazardous and forced child labor violations (as opposed to child labor violations). The GOTL has yet to define hazardous and forced child labor in its domestic legislation and laws.

¶4. There was no separate funding for enforcement agencies to carry out inspections.

¶5. The GOTL employs only 8 permanent labor inspectors. None are dedicated specifically to child labor.

¶6. There is no data available on how many child labor inspections were conducted.

¶7. Anecdotal evidence suggests that a few children who had been forced into prostitution were removed and referred to an NGO that provides assistance to the victims. There is no data available to indicate the total numbers involved.

¶8. There were no child labor cases or prosecutions opened.

¶9. There were no child labor cases resolved.

¶10. There were no reported violations or convictions.

DILI 00000027 002 OF 003

¶11. Not applicable.

¶12. Not applicable.

¶13. Continued efforts will be needed to effectively combat exploitative child labor.

¶14. The GOTL

2D) Child trafficking, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) & the use of children in illicit activities:

¶1. There are no agencies or personnel dedicated to the enforcement of these forms of child labor. The lack of data indicating the scope of the problem in Timor-Leste makes it difficult to determine whether the 8 permanent labor inspectors and existing police units are sufficient to address these problems.

¶2. No specific funding was dedicated to these problems. Virtually all GOTL enforcement agencies suffer from chronic capacity problems and lack the necessary funding, training, and qualified personnel to address these and other problems.

¶3. There is a hot line for trafficking in persons (not specifically for child trafficking). Data was not available on how many complaints were received.

¶4. There were no investigations opened.

¶5. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some children were rescued as child prostitution cases came to light, but there are no statistics available.

¶6. No arrests or prosecutions.

- ¶7. No cases closed or resolved.
- ¶8. No convictions.
- ¶9. Not applicable.
- ¶10. Not applicable.
- ¶11. Not applicable.
- ¶12. No specific training was offered.
- ¶13. Not applicable.

2E) Government Policies on Child Labor

- ¶1. The GOTL did not have a specific policy or plan to address exploitative child labor, although they have established a Child Labor Commission (in cooperation with the ILO and the Brazilian government) to define child labor and begin to develop policies to address it.
- ¶2. Exploitative labor is not specifically addressed in poverty reduction or other policies.
- ¶3. Not applicable.
- ¶4. Not applicable.
- ¶5. Not applicable.
- ¶6. In addition to the Commission mentioned above which is due to initiate its activities later this year, the GOTL participated in conferences on child labor in Portugal in February 2009 and in the Hague in May 2009.
- ¶7. The GOTL signed an agreement with the ILO and the Brazilian government to establish the Commission described above.

2F) Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent Child Labor:

- ¶1. The GOTL has not implemented any programs designed to address the worst forms of child labor.
- ¶2. The GOTL did not incorporate child labor specifically as an issue to be addressed by other programs.
- ¶3. Not applicable.
- ¶4. Not applicable.

DILI 00000027 003 OF 003

- ¶5. Not applicable.
- ¶6. The agreement to establish a Child Labor Commission with the ILO and Brazil was signed in 2009 and is expected to initiate its activities in March 2010.

2G) Continual Progress: While the GOTL has not made any material progress combating exploitative child labor, it has taken steps to begin addressing the issue. Specifically, the ratification of ILO Convention 182 in April 2009 represented an important official commitment to addressing the issue. A new Labor Code is expected to be adopted this year and would also strengthen existing enforcement mechanisms to address the problem of child labor. In addition, the signing of an agreement with the ILO and the Brazilian government to establish a Child Labor Commission has established an operational mechanism whereby the GOTL hopes to adopt a definition of various types of child

labor, raise public awareness of the problem, and develop a plan to address the problem. The Commission is expected to initiate its activities in March 2010 and to remain active for one year. These developments are important steps in establishing the framework in which the GOTL can begin to address the problem of exploitative child labor in the coming years.

KLEMM